

The background features several large, overlapping, hand-drawn style swirls in light green, light blue, and light purple. Scattered throughout are numerous small, yellow, triangular shapes, some pointing upwards and others downwards, resembling confetti or stylized sunbeams.

Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing by Roberts and Jacobs

English Composition III

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What Is Literature and Why Do We Study It?

- Literature is
 - Composition that tells a story, dramatizes a situation, expresses emotions, analyzes and advocates ideas
 - Helps us grow personally and intellectually
 - Provides an objective base for knowledge and understanding
 - Shapes our goals and values by clarifying our own identities, both positively and negatively
 - Literature makes us human.



Genres

- Four genres of literature:
 - **Prose fiction**
 - Myths, parables, romances, novels, short stories
 - **Poetry**
 - Open form and closed form
 - Relies on imagery, figurative language, sound
 - **Drama**
 - Made up of dialogue and set direction
 - Designed to be performed
 - **Nonfiction prose**
 - News reports, feature articles, essays, editorials, textbooks, historical and biographical works



Guidelines for Reading Literature

- First reading
 - Determine what is happening, where, what, who is involved, major characters
 - Make a record of your reactions and responses
 - Describe characterizations, events, techniques and ideas
- Second reading
 - Trace developing patterns
 - Write expanded notes about characters, situations, actions
 - Write paragraph describing your reactions and thoughts
 - Write down questions that arise as you read (in the margins)



Writing a Precis

- **Precis = a concise summary = paraphrase**
 - Retell the highlights so reader will know main sections
 - Only essential details – they must be correct and accurate
 - Must be an original essay, written in your own words
 - Be sure to introduce the title and author
 - Avoid judgments
 - Use present tense when retelling a story



Elements of Fiction

- Essence of fiction = narration (the telling)
- Elements of fiction = verisimilitude and donnee
 - Verisimilitude = realism
 - Must be compelling enough that the reader can “suspend disbelief”
 - Donnee = premise
 - Something given by which you can judge the realism = ground rules
- Sources of elements
 - Character, plot, structure, theme, symbolism, style, point of view, tone, irony

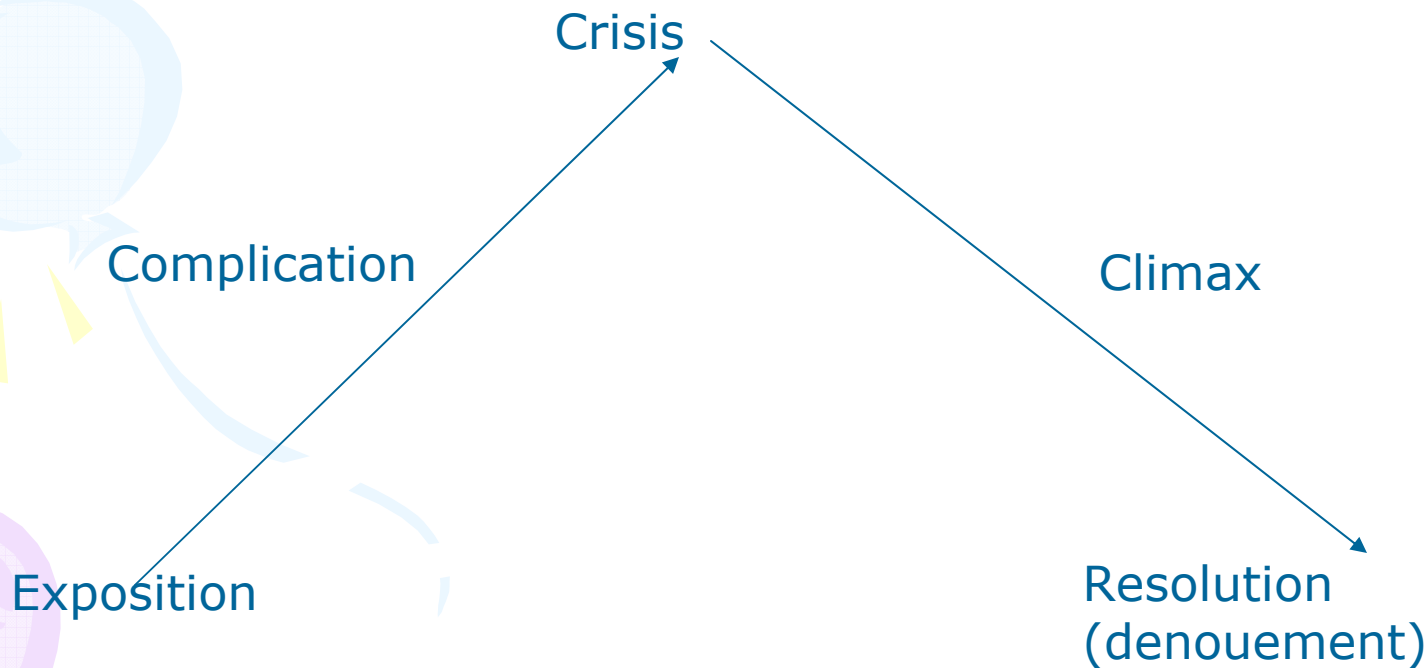


Plot and Structure

- Plot = reflection of motivation and causation
 - No plot = The king died and then the queen died.
 - Plot = The king died, and then the queen died of grief.
- Conflict = controlling impulse in a connected pattern of causes and effects
 - Opposition of two or more people (e.g., hatred, envy, anger, argument, avoidance, gossip, lies, fighting, etc.)
- Dilemma = Conflict within or for one person
 - Conflict is a major element of plot because it arouses curiosity, causes doubt, creates tension, produces interest
 - No tension = no interest

Structure of Fiction

- Structure defines the layout of the work



▶ Another structural element used sometimes = Flashback



Characters in Fiction

- Character = verbal representation of a human being
 - **Rounded** = lifelike, full, dynamic, reader can predict future behavior because of an understanding of the personality
 - **Protagonist** = the hero or heroine, main person in the story, person on the quest, etc.
 - **Antagonist** = the person causing the conflict, in opposition to the protagonist, the obstacle, etc.
 - **Flat** = no growth, static
 - **Stock** = representative of a group or class (stereotypical)
 - Characters disclosed through
 - Actions
 - Descriptions, both personal and environmental
 - Dramatic statements and thoughts
 - Statements by other characters
 - Statements by the author speaking as storyteller, or observer
 - Characters need to have verisimilitude, be probable or plausible



Point of View

- Refers to speaker, narrator, persona or voice created by the author to tell the story
- Point of view depends on two factors:
 - Physical situation of the narrator as an observer
 - Speaker's intellectual and emotional position
- First person = I, we
- Second person = You (uncommon)
- Third person = He, she, they (most common)
- Point of view may be:
 - Dramatic/objective = strictly reporting
 - Omniscient = all-knowing
 - Limited omniscient = some insight



Setting

- Setting = a work's natural, manufactured, political, cultural and temporal environment, including everything that characters know and own (place, time, objects)
- Major purpose = to establish realism or verisimilitude, and to organize a story
- Setting helps create atmosphere or mood
- Setting may reinforce characters and theme, in order to establish expectations that are the opposite of what occurs = irony

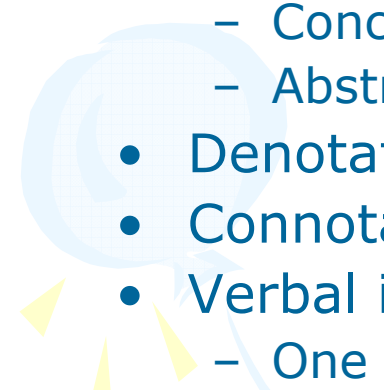
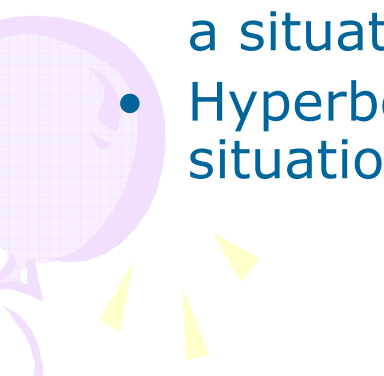


Tone and Style

- Tone = methods by which writers and speakers reveal attitudes or feelings
- Style = ways in which writers assemble words to tell the story, to develop an argument, dramatize the play, compose the poem
 - Choice of words in the service of content
- Essential aspect of style is diction
 - Formal = standard or elegant words
 - Neutral = everyday standard vocabulary
 - Informal = colloquial, substandard language, slang



Tone and Style (cont'd)

- Language may be:
 - Specific = images
 - General = broad classes
 - Concrete = qualities of immediate perception
 - Abstract = broader, less palpable qualities
 - Denotation = word meanings
 - Connotation = word suggestions
 - Verbal irony = contradictory statements
 - One thing said, opposite is meant
 - Irony = satire, parody, sarcasm, double entendre
 - Understatement = does not fully describe the importance of a situation – deliberately
 - Hyperbole (overstatement) = words far in excess of the situation
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Symbolism and Allegory

- Symbolism and allegory are modes that expand meaning
- Symbol creates a direct, meaningful equation between:
 - A specific object, scene, character, or action
 - Ideas, values, persons or ways of life
- Symbols may be:
 - **Cultural (universal)** = known by most literate people (e.g., white dove, color black)
 - **Contextual (authorial)** = private, created by the author



Symbolism and Allegory (cont'd)

- **Allegory** is a symbol = complete and self-sufficient narrative (e.g., “Young Goodman Brown”)
- **Fable** = stories about animals that possess human traits (e.g., Aesop’s Fables)
- **Parable** = allegory with moral or religious bent (e.g., Biblical stories)
- **Myth** = story that embodies and codifies religious, philosophical and cultural values of the civilization in which it is composed (e.g., George Washington chopping down the cherry tree)
- **Allusion** = the use of other culturally well-known works from the Bible, Greek and Roman mythology, famous art, etc.



Idea or Theme

- Idea = results of general and abstract thinking
 - In literature, ideas relate to meaning, interpretation, explanation and significance
- Literature embodies values along with ideas
 - Ideas are vital to an understanding and appreciation of literature
- Ideas are not as obvious as character or setting. It is important to consider the meaning of what you've read and then develop an explanatory and comprehensive assertion.
- Theme can be found in any of these:
 - Direct statements by the authorial voice
 - Direct statements by a first-person speaker
 - Dramatic statements by characters
 - Figurative language, characters who stand for ideas
 - The work itself